

THE FATHERS

for Gary Gildner

We are both, and all,
from Flint and stone,
the dissimilar;

no one with the name
of Gary or Danny
can be taken serious,

let alone our fathers
dying in our sleeves
like laughs.

We are north, pal, our hands
never deciduous, but
bangled, industrious, hard,

our small memories as dark
as Ethel Waters, as big
as a trout death, family.

Up in the red hills our fathers
rip away flesh, sons, their
small pouches of past,

their fangs honed on their own
whelp cowering in snapping sumac
pen in hand and spectacled.

THE STARS

One day the stars
and their every relative
were camping there
in the streets,

the Big and Little,
old Orion, and every
imaginable animal,
greasy and lousy.

Their money no good,
funny language hard
to understand, radical
as a wrench,

their smiles carved
the sidewalk and the first
daffodils, odd in their own way,
so they left that night.

We stirred like spring fish,
silver bullets in our teeth, antsy
as small towns, our breath the color
of Hue, our arms empty, mother in our mouths.

NUMBER FORTY-NINE

- 1 Odd dog
 floating down four feet
 at a time, just to be here?

I haven't black berries
to feed you. I have not money
for meat.

I will situate your carcass
in a room of two-way mirrors,
watch you rot.

Watch me take your picture,
blow it up, imagine it
into a montana storm.

- 2 The number two is the reason
 I don't listen to jazz
 any. More.

- 3 He had a moustache, and one
 guitar. He could sing with each
 in South Dakota, where lawns
 grew near, and lank hills;
 everything grew near,

enough, big enough to keep,
odd as the sun,
stalled as boots on the highway,
bruised as baggage you never
thought would see its way
home again.

- 4 "Love set you going like a fat
 gold watch." There must be something
 else to remember of her. That
 is all I recall. I've moved the gas

stove down the stairs. Right now
you are curling tight as eternity,
set for death, no matter
what I tell you not to do.

- 5 Look: do not send me parts of You,